

**WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
OUT-OF-BASIN TRANSFER COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF MEETING

October 8, 2003

Members Present:

Kevin Cute
Jeff Hershberger
Herb Johnston
Denise Poyer
Alisa Richardson
Henry Meyer

Members Absent:

Ken Burke
Paul Corina
Mike Covellone
John Dubis
Julia Forgue
Stan Knox
Pam Marchand
Ed Szymanski

Water Resources Board Staff:

Connie McGreavy

Guests: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

Kevin Cute called the meeting to order at 1:40 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes for June, July, August, and September were approved with corrections.

III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. WAPAC Presentation – Comments Received

Mr. Hershberger reported on the comments from the presentation. There was a discussion concerning whether agricultural water use results in OOB, and whether or not to include natural evapotranspiration in the calculations for water consumption. It was felt by Mr. Hershberger and the committee that only anthropogenic-enhanced losses should be used. For agricultural uses, it would be easier to measure consumption if farmers were required to meter as they pump. How to differentiate home consumption vs. lawn watering was also discussed. Ms. McGreavy stated that the Water Use Committee is taking a hard look at water use measurement and estimation coefficients.

Another comment was the objection to the statement about discouraging future OOB. The current infrastructure is based on lawful OOB; future transfers are not necessarily detrimental to a basin. The committee agreed that future OOB should be managed, not discouraged. The committee agreed with the WAPAC recommendation that water should be put back into the basin whenever possible. Ms. McGreavy

relayed another comment regarding the need for more regulatory authorities reflected on the diagrams prepared by the Water Rights Committee.

B. Update on OOBT Report Writing

Mr. Cute asked for more time to develop his sections. The item was tabled until the next meeting.

C. Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for Narragansett Bay - Relevant findings were discussed in the context of the Action Item A (see below).

IV. ITEMS FOR ACTION

A. Finalize OOBT Committee's Recommendations

Ms. McGreavy presented a revised list of recommendations pulled from Mr. Johnson's section of the report and previous meetings. The committee reviewed the recommendations item by item. It became clear that there was a need to establish a definition for "safe yield" as the first priority. The committee decided to use the one from the Regulated Riparian Model Water Code (Code) that states: "Safe yield is the amount of water available for withdrawal without impairing the long-term social utility of the water source, including the maintenance of the protected biological, chemical, and physical integrity of the source." The committee clarified that the Water Supply Systems Management (WSSMP) regulations would need to be revised to reflect the new language.

Discussion also centered on the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for Narragansett Bay (CCMP). Ms. McGreavy spoke about several of the recommendations from the CCMP that are relevant to what the OOBT committee is recommending. Ms. Richardson reported that the Narragansett Bay Project (NBP) is relocating from the RI Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM) to the Univ. of RI. NBP staff are reviewing the CCMP and developing ways to implement the recommendations.

The changes to the Recommendations suggested by the committee are as follows:

Under Item 1. add "on a basin-wide level" after "fairly allocate water"

Under Combined Water/Wastewater Permit Criteria, bullet 2 should remove "of supply and water recharge capacity"

Under bullet 3 add "Strong" before the word "Evidence"

Under bullet 4 add after Water Quality Considerations "to maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the water resource." This reinforces the safe yield definition.

Under bullet 6, dot 1 replace "supply" with "safe yield".

Under dot 2 add "Existing and proposed" before OOBT

Under dot 3 remove (varies seasonally) and add "standards"

Under Item 2 replace the first word "Investigate" with the word "Establish".

The committee also discussed whether to recommend a basin-wide management system. Mr. Johnson expressed that while most surface reservoirs are currently managed, there is no management system for groundwater. In fact, ground water is very hard to manage. Ms. Richardson brought up the problem of developing build-out scenarios by towns. Water availability is not part of the formula for developing the build-out potential, but rather zoning and wetland coverage. Without taking into account water resources, build-out projections could easily produce over use of the water resources. Watershed management should constrain development.

Mr. Johnson recommends that basin management start with those basins that have ground water aquifers that are not being managed. There could be development of a watershed board for each basin under the organization of the WRB. There would be a resource team with knowledge of all aspects of the basin which would be able to advise on the water management including OOBT. Other discussion centered on problems with the political aspects of allowing a state agency to make the final decisions. The consensus of the committee was that it was still very important to recommend watershed management of water resources.

Future issues to be discussed are:

- Conservation measures, among other criteria for approving OOBT
- Areas of Critical Concern; establish definition (preferably an existing one); develop a consistency amongst all the WAPAC committees of the definition.
- Development and build-out
- Special water management areas
- Setting up basin management roles

Mr. Cote asked that the committee focuses on the other recommendations and come prepared to address them at the next meeting, if not before.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Poyer
Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Assn.

Date